

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of October 13, 2015

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Patrick DeMasi (Utility Superintendent), Ray Hudson (Road Foreman), Lawton Rutter (Chief, Northfield Ambulance Service), Michele Braun (Special Projects Consultant), Robert Clark (Phelps Engineering), Lance Phelps (Phelps Engineering), Leslie Striebe (GO! Northfield), Randy Chamberlin, Brenda Chamberlin, Jerry Tabor (Tabor Earth Extractors), Courtney Tabor (Tabor Earth Extractors), Sara Nevin, Maggie Kerrin, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Chair Quinn asked that the agenda be adjusted to add Leslie Striebe (GO! Northfield) and Sara Nevin under "Public Participation."
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

a. **Robert M. Clark, Phelps Engineering: Central/Washington and King Streets Water Projects.**

The last time Mr. Clark had addressed the Board was prior to Labor Day (08/25/15) as the Central/Washington Streets Water Project was nearing completion. He now would like to provide another update as that project has been completed and the King Street Water Project recently was substantially completed. Mr. Clark noted that both projects were finished under budget as the contingency funds that had been set aside did not have to be used. The final applications for payments will be forwarded to the Town this month and only the eleven (11) month warranty inspections still need to be done. Manager Schulz stated that there have been concerns expressed about the road cuts on Central Street and asked if the current plan is to wait until next spring to see if they settle. Mr. Clark confirmed that this was the case and added that the new pavement was purposely left a little high in order to allow for this settlement over the winter. The state inspector looked at the work during the final walkthrough and determined that it was acceptable and that it should not be disturbed until next spring (if needed). Selectman Maxwell asked about the road cuts on South Main Street. Mr. Clark said that these were inspected at the same time and there did not seem to be any major problems. Selectman Goslant asked if these road cuts would be reviewed in the spring as well. Mr. Clark said that they would. Selectman Goslant felt this was a good idea as snow plows may damage the rises over the winter. Chair Quinn asked how long was the work under warranty. Mr. Clark said it was for twelve (12) months after project completion. He asked that he be informed if any problems develop in the interim.

Phelps Engineering president and founder Lance Phelps wanted to add a few things to Mr. Clark's report. He first thanked Northfield for awarding this and other projects to Phelps Engineering and hoped that the work was done to everyone's satisfaction. He then announced that with his upcoming retirement, Phelps Engineering will be closing down in stages and Mr. Clark will be taking a position with Otter Creek Engineering. However, there will be a transitional period over the next year and this project's warranty and indemnification will remain intact. Even though he will work for a different firm, Mr. Clark will assist with any closedown work that needs to be done. Chair Quinn thanked Mr. Phelps for all of Phelps Engineering's past service to Northfield.

Leslie Striebe lives on Central Street and asked if any of the leftover contingency funds could be used to repave the whole street. Chair Quinn stated that the grant monies received were designated for a water project; the road and sidewalk work that had been done was only to restore what had been damaged during the installation of the new water mains, etc. The cost of any additional paving would have to come out of the Highway Department's budget. Ms. Striebe asked if Central Street residents could make a request at the next Town Meeting (03/01/16) to increase this budget in order to repave the whole street. Manager Schulz said that this was an option.

- b. **Leslie Striebe, GO! Northfield: "Welcome to Northfield" Signs.** Ms. Striebe stated that the Economic Development Committee had asked GO! Northfield to look into replacing the signs at the north and south ends of town on Vermont Route 12. The new ones would complement the branding scheme suggested by the Vermont Downtown Action Team (V-DAT) after its visit to Northfield in April 2014. The amount budgeted for both signs was \$10,000. Ms. Striebe was able to get a \$2,900 quote for the signs themselves but the additional cost of the concrete base, excavating the site, installing the signs, etc. probably will push the project's total cost above \$10,000. In addition, since residents have expressed their desire to have the signs lit at night, there would be extra costs for solar panels, etc. Once the signs have been installed, new banners matching the branding scheme would be ordered and placed around the community.

Chair Quinn looked at the proposed designs for the new signs and was very positive. However, he would like fundraising efforts to cover any cost overages rather than ask taxpayers for additional funds. Selectman Maxwell has considerable experience in fundraising and he offered his services. In addition, he felt that the Town could provide some in-kind services, such as performing some (if not all) of the excavation and installation. Since this is such a worthy project, Selectman Maxwell felt that the Northfield public would be willing to make financial contributions. Chair Quinn thanked Ms. Striebe and GO! Northfield for taking the lead in this.

- c. **Sara Nevin: Backroad Maintenance and Paving.** Ms. Nevin lives on an unpaved backroad (West Hill Road) and felt that there are several weeks during the year when these roads are basically impassible. In addition, the school buses don't travel on these roads during Mud Season, which creates a dangerous situation for children having to walk in the dark to the paved roads. Ms. Nevin would like the Select Board to earmark funds each year for new paving. Chair Quinn asked Road Foreman Ray Hudson how much it would cost to pave a mile of dirt road. Mr. Hudson estimated that the total cost, which would include preparing the road beforehand, would be about \$300,000. Manager Schulz noted that the Town has tried to make the backroads more passible during Mud Season by treating them with a different type of calcium chloride that firms up the roads and keeps water from penetrating. Selectman Gadbois noted that since there are about forty (40) miles of unpaved backroads, the amount it would cost to pave them all would be astronomical and would cause the tax rate to skyrocket. Ms. Nevin stated that Northfielders who live on the backroads pay the same tax rates as other residents but face added burdens during the winter and spring months. She would like the Select Board to consider adding a few miles of new pavement each year.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **September 22, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **September 22, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #08-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve Warrant #08-16 in the amount of \$1,177,327.03. Selectman Doney asked about a \$432 charge to replace a lamp assembly on a Northfield Police Department (NPD) cruiser. Mr. Hudson has seen the vehicle and stated water got into the assembly and despite efforts to jury rig repairs, the LED lights stopped working and it had to be replaced. Selectman Goslant noted a \$1,400 charge for paramedic intercepts in August. Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) Chief Lawton Rutter noted that this had been a very busy month for callouts so some outside assistance was needed. He added that the intercept costs will be offset by the additional revenue that NAS made that month. Selectman Goslant saw legal bills for a matter he thought had been settled. Manager Schulz said that this particular foreclosure process is nearly complete and that the bill amounts had dropped considerably. Selectman Maxwell asked about the contracted cemetery services. Manager Schulz said that there is a contract with Bruce Wright (B.W. Masonry) to maintain the cemeteries and act as sexton during interments. Most of that work takes place during the summer months. Selectman Goslant added that a few years ago the Town took over the Falls Cemetery, which had been neglected for some time. Chair Quinn remains concerned about the high cost of having the Brown Public Library's elevator serviced and inspected every three (3) months. He doesn't think it is used that often and wondered if this expense could be reduced. Manager Schulz will look into whether this service could be done on a semi-annual basis instead. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #08-16A.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #08-16A in the amount of \$27,384.10. This warrant consists of payments (principal and interest) on the bank notes to be renewed later in the meeting. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through September 27, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$97,361.36. Selectman Doney is concerned about the level of NPD overtime and part-time expenses. Manager Schulz believes the amount usually peaks around this time of year with Labor Day coverage, vacations, etc. He has asked NPD Chief James Dziobek to keep these costs under control. Selectman Goslant said that this seems to be an ever-present issue. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Flood Hazard Mitigation Projects.** Michele Braun previously served as Northfield's Zoning Administrator but now works for the Town as a part-time consultant for special projects. In the last meeting's Board packets there had been a memo from her regarding a proposed elevation project for two (2) homes on Water Street along with a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The State of Vermont would pay for seventy-five percent (75%) of the cost through Hazard Mitigation grants. The remainder would be covered by the property owners and they would be asked to put the estimated amount into an escrow account from which the Town could pay any invoices that the State will not cover. This process is detailed in the MOU that the property owners would be asked to sign before the project commences. Chair Quinn asked if the property owners have agreed to this. Ms. Braun stated that she did contact them to gauge initial interest but did not feel free to provide any details until the Select Board has authorized her to proceed with the process as described. W.B. Rogers has inspected the houses and will develop cost estimates on raising the structures. That will allow Ms. Braun to inform the homeowners how much they will be expected to contribute to this project. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to authorize Ms. Braun to proceed with project and work with the affected homeowners. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

Ms. Braun added that two (2) additional homeowners are interested in the FEMA buyout process for structures substantially damaged by Tropical Storm Irene. She will assist them with the applications. The fund that covers this expense has funding available since it has been replenished by post-Irene natural disasters, such as last year's ice storm.

- b. Request to Discontinue Town Highway (Class Four Road): Fox Farm Road.** Manager Schulz stated that this 1100 foot road comes off of Stony Brook Road and leads to a single house. The Town does not maintain the road so the homeowners would like the road discontinued so that they themselves can pay to have it improved. The formal process requires a site visit and public hearing before the Select Board can take any action. Randall Chamberlin is a neighbor who has acted as a caretaker for the property owners in their absence. He stated that the road has been largely impassable for several years as it was severely damaged by Tropical Storm Irene. Since the property owners will be investing a considerable amount in road improvements, they would like to own it afterwards. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to authorize Manager Schulz to begin the formal process for discontinuing this road and allow the property owners to commence road improvements in the interim. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Manager Schulz will try to schedule the site visit as soon as possible.

- c. Appointments to the Northfield Conservation Commission.** There have been two (2) vacant positions on the Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC) for several months. This past week, residents Jane Pekol and Nathaniel Miller have expressed interest in serving. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to appoint Jane Pekol and Nathaniel Miller to the NCC vacant positions. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- d. Bid Award for Winter Sand & Crushed Gravel.** Bid proposals for winter sand and crushed gravel ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch) were solicited and this afternoon was the deadline. Manager Schulz noted that winter sand prices have risen this past year by about one third. Therefore, there needs to be some discussion regarding whether the Town should try to save money by sending its own vehicles to load at the pit at a lower price rather than having it delivered. Manager Schulz would prefer that the Town Highway would pick up as much as possible. Road Foreman Ray Hudson noted that it sometimes is difficult for the crew to break off from road maintenance to go haul in additional winter sand. In addition, the sand sometimes freezes in the winter and then has to be broken up before it is usable. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to award the winter sand bid to Tabor Earth Extractors for the pit price of \$12.00 per cubic yard. **Motion passed 4-1-0, with Chair Quinn voting in the negative.**

The Select Board then turned to the bid proposals for crushed gravel, the price of which remains about the same as last year. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to award the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch crushed gravel bid to Tabor Earth Extractors for the delivered price of \$13.00 per cubic yard. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Although the quoted price from Northeast Material Group for $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch crushed gravel was slightly lower, there was a Board consensus that the material provided by Pike Industries was of higher quality. In addition, since the Pike Industries pit in Williamstown is located much closer than the Northeast Material Group pit in Graniteville, there would be savings in time and money for the Highway crew to pick up from them. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to award the $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch crushed gravel bid to Pike Industries for the delivered price of \$17.65 per cubic yard and for the pit price of \$10.05 per cubic yard. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- e. Bid Award for Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) Billing Services.** Manager Schulz noted that this had been discussed at the previous meeting but action was tabled until additional information was gathered. The references for the two leading candidates (EMS Billing and Lyndon Rescue) were rechecked and no problems were found. Manager Schulz stated that he, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, and NAS Chief Lawton Rutter had reviewed the bid proposals and although they all believe Northfield would be well served by either company, they do lean towards awarding the bid to Lyndon Rescue. The main reason for this is that while EMS Billing would charge a flat rate (\$15.00) for each billable ambulance run, Lyndon Rescue would take a percentage (5.25%) of total fees collected.

Chief Rutter generally favors incentive-based contracts and that is why he recommends hiring Lyndon Rescue. The first contract would be for one and one-half (1½) years and could be extended if there is satisfactory performance during this period. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to award the NAS Billing Services bid to Lyndon Rescue. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- f. **Bid Award for Engineering Services (Elm Street Retaining Wall).** Manager Schulz stated since this retaining wall has been deteriorating for a number of years, bid proposals were solicited for engineering services to resolve this. Four (4) bids were received and ranged in amount from \$8,500 to \$22,300. Manager Schulz noted that he was not impressed with the lowest bid as it did not include a lot of detail. The higher bids also included much more effort in taking site specific conditions into account. Manager Schulz favors awarding the project to Otter Creek Engineering (\$22,300) as their proposal covers all the bases. Since about eighty percent (80%) of the cost of these engineering services will be covered by grant funds, the Town has more flexibility and should accept the best proposal. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to award the engineering services bid to Otter Creek Engineering for \$22,300. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- g. **Bond Anticipation Note (Central/Washington Streets Water Mains).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$1,250,000 at 1.14% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- h. **Bond Anticipation Note (King Street Water Mains).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$950,000 at 1.14% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- i. **Current Expense Note (Disaster Recovery).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve and sign the Current Expense Note in the amount of \$22,536 at 1.14% interest; to approve and sign the Current Expense Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Current Expense Borrowing Tax Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Memorial Park Renovations.** Selectman Gadbois noted that at the last meeting representatives from the Recreation Committee were seeking Board authorization for various renovations at Memorial Park, such as reconfiguring the playing fields to make space for a regulation-sized soccer field. Manager Schulz had asked for a meeting with all interested parties before work was begun and Selectman Gadbois asked if it had taken place yet. Manager Schulz said it did not but he did visit the site with Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi and Road Foreman Ray Hudson. He saw for himself how much material would have to be moved around during the project. Selectman Goslant attended last night's Recreation Committee meeting and said that the proposed project had been discussed further. He noted that the project would include expanding the parking area and it is unlikely that the actual work will begin this year. The Committee has asked TDS Telecom to provide some test drillings of the work area to determine whether or not any ledge will be encountered.

IX. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.

X. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).** There was none.

XI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:15 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:35 p.m. No action was taken.

XII. **ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of October 27, 2015.